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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1061  
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY

UNCLAS JERUSALEM 000565

SIPDIS

SIPDIS  
SENSITIVE

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/WATERS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ECON](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: REMOVAL OF 47 ROADBLOCKS; PALESTINIANS DISMISS  
CHANGES AS UNIMPORTANT OR ILLUSORY

11. (SBU) Summary: According to the PA office of Civil Affairs, the GOI Civil Administration informed the PA that 47 obstacles in the West Bank (mostly dirt mounds blocking local road access onto highways) have been or will be removed. PA contacts say the list includes the Taybeh checkpoint between Ramallah and Jericho. PM Salam Fayyad told press the impact of the removed obstacle is a positive, but marginal step. End Summary.

Israeli Civil Administration:  
We're Removing 47 Obstacles  
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12. (SBU) According to the PA office of Civil Affairs, the GOI Civil Administration informed the PA on March 30 that the IDF has removed or will remove 47 obstacles to movement in the West Bank, mostly dirt mounds blocking local road access onto highways. The 47 include 4 near Jenin, 22 near Qalqiliya, 11 near Nablus and 10 near Jericho. The Civil Administration told the PA it will provide a map in the next 48 hours detailing the locations of the obstacles removed, including photos. (Note: ConGen will follow up to assess the impact of removing these specific obstacles. End Note).

13. (SBU) PA Civil Affairs contacts told ConGen Political Specialist that the Civil Administration said the IDF will remove the Taybeh checkpoint (also called Rimoni or Carmelo) and the Dead Sea checkpoint near the junction of Routes 1 and 90, but thereafter told the PA that the Dead Sea checkpoint will remain in place. (Note: the Dead Sea checkpoint consists of temporary fixtures/barriers, but is manned by border police most of the time to block Palestinians from reaching the Dead Sea. According to PA security contacts, Israeli security personnel operated the checkpoint on April 11. End note). PA contacts said the IDF did not have security personnel at Taybeh checkpoint March 31 or April 1, but the checkpoint infrastructure remained in place. (Note: Previously, Taybeh was only occasionally manned by the IDF. If it remains open full-time and if it is not effectively replaced by "flying checkpoints," it will ease access between Jericho and Ramallah. End note).

Palestinians Largely Dismiss Steps  
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14. (SBU) In comments to Palestinian press, PM Salam Fayyad downplayed the impact of the removed obstacles, calling it a "very small step, which while we don't reject does not accomplish lifting all the roadblocks which seriously hinder movement throughout the West Bank." PA Civil Affairs chief Hussayn al-Shaykh told Palestinian newspapers March 31 that the GOI action was "useless" and does not include removal of

any major checkpoints. PLO Secretary-General Yasser Abd Rabbo commented to the Consul General on March 31 that "moving 47 piles of dirt" in the West Bank will have minimal impact on movement or public opinion. PA National Security Forces (NSF) contacts report that the IDF photographed removal of dirt mounds the IDF had just placed near Tulkarm a few days before and alleged to ConGen that many of the obstacle removals were more showmanship than substance.

WALLES